

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

GOVERNOR MURPHY SIGNS LEGISLATION BANNING SMOKING AT PUBLIC BEACHES AND PARKS

LONG BRANCH - Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation prohibiting smoking at public beaches and parks in New Jersey. The bill, S-2534, updates the “New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act of 2006.”

“The Jersey Shore has always been one of our state’s – and nation’s – great natural treasures, and a place for families to enjoy,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Signing this legislation demonstrates my firm commitment to protecting our environment and public health while preserving the quality and cleanliness of our public beaches and park areas.”

Tobacco use is a significant public health threat and a high-risk factor for many diseases, including lung cancer, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), heart disease, stroke and asthma. The use of electronic smoking devices may also pose a health risk due to their smoke vapors. In addition, exposure to second-hand smoke is a health hazard for a majority of the non-smoking public and can lead to illness and premature death.

According to the American Lung Association, more than 480,000 people die from tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke, making it the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. In New Jersey, tobacco use takes the lives of nearly 12,000 residents every year.

Furthermore, results of the 2017 beach sweep by Clean Ocean Action showed that the litter collected by volunteers last year contained more than 29,000 cigarette butts, more than 1,150 lighters, nearly 1,900 empty cigarette packs and 7,172 cigar tips. Cigarette butts threaten marine wildlife as a choking hazard and are capable of leeching deadly toxins.

The bill authorizes the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), towns and counties to take measures to educate the public about the smoking ban and associated penalties, which can be \$250 for a first offense, \$500 for a second offense, and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense.

The ban will go into effect 180 days after the law is enacted.

Bill sponsors include Senate President Steve Sweeney, Senators Vin Gopal and Bob Smith and Assembly members Vincent Mazzeo, Clinton Calabrese, Valerie Vainieri Huttie and Paul Moriarty.

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Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000